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SUBJECT: Baden-Wuerttemberg's Younger Political Leadership Sets New Dynamic

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: Baden-Wuerttemberg's four primary political parties have all in the last six months elected new and younger party leaders, setting in motion new political dynamics in the state. The trend began in June of 2009 when the FDP surprisingly chose Hans-Ulrich Ruelke (48) as caucus chief. Following the September 27 national elections, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Green party also turned their leadership over to younger politicians, while the new, younger CDU head rose to power following the nomination of Minister-President Oettinger to the EU Commission.

These new political leaders will guide the parties into the 2011 Baden-Wuerttemberg state election, with campaigns beginning this year. While all ramifications are not yet clear, the CDU will likely turn more conservative and become more closely aligned with the FDP, with whom it has already governed Baden-Wuerttemberg for 13 years, while the Greens and SPD may move more to the left to attract voters. END SUMMARY

CDU Likely Will Become more Conservative With Mappus

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¶2. (SBU) Stefan Mappus (43), whom B-W CDU members already elected as the new CDU state chair and lead candidate for the 2011 state election with 90 percent of the vote, is set to become Baden-Wuerttemberg's next Minister-President later this month when M-P Oettinger leaves office. Oettinger and Mappus differ both in their political perspectives, centrist vs. conservative, and in their personalities, consensus-oriented vs. direct/confrontational. Mappus earned his conservative reputation by identifying with the small-town CDU base in Baden-Wuerttemberg, due to his allegiance to traditional family and religious values, and his public objections to Oettinger's coalition discussions with the Green party. Since becoming M-P designate, Mappus has said that the CDU should return to their roots as a "Volkspartei." Although he has said that he plans to continue some of Oettinger's "social" programs, such as the expansion of day-care programs, he has also publicly said that he wants to reintroduce conservative ideas into the political debate. With regard to personal style, Hans-Georg Koch, chief of the policy section in the B-W state chancellery, described Mappus as a "go-getter" and Olaf Benthage, former FDP General Manager for B-W, praised Mappus's "clear, direct leadership style."

FDP Kicks Off Generational Change

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¶3. (SBU) The B-W FDP kicked off the wave of political change in June 2009 when FDP members surprisingly dropped long-time incumbent Ulrich Noll (63) and installed Ruelke as the new caucus chief. Continued discontent with the leadership style of Noll, who many found to be authoritarian and occasionally confrontational, brought on the change. Ruelke is known to be a close personal friend of designated M-P Mappus. They both come from Pforzheim. Ruelke and Mappus have already demonstrated their close relationship by jointly

requesting further tax cuts -- openly opposing departing M-P Oettinger on this issue. According to Heiderose Berroth, FDP state parliament member, had Ruelke not become caucus chief, the future alliance between the CDU and FDP would have suffered as Mappus and former FDP chief Noll "hated each other." Another high level B-W FDP source told Poloff and Polspec that FDP state party chair and Bundestag floor leader Birgit Homburger (44) is also close with Mappus and has already worked with him around Oettinger, such as in pressing for the recent ousting of the LBBW chair, Jaschinski. A more conservative CDU, our source explained, will also benefit the FDP as it will yield the center back to the Liberals, giving them a strong position for the 2011 election.

#### New SPD Leader Faces Tough Job Ahead

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¶4. (SBU) The new SPD leader, Nils Schmid, took over the Baden-Wuerttemberg party on November 21 after winning an internal party referendum of the SPD's rank and file. Schmid is 36 years old and has served in the State Parliament since the age of 23, being one of the youngest representatives ever. Schmid's election reflected the SPD's desire for new blood and a regeneration following the disastrous national election when the B-W SPD won only 19.3% of the vote, within one percentage point of the B-W FDP's returns. Schmid faces the difficult task of reviving his demoralized party. Despite his youth, he is an experienced politician, the financial expert of the state party and an outspoken supporter of Agenda 2010. Schmid hopes to increase the attractiveness of the B-W SPD by including the rank and file in the future decision-making process, something that the SPD's new national chair, Sigmar Gabriel, has also stressed. He is married to

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a German of Turkish decent and also wants to attract more immigrant voters to the SPD.

#### Greens Chose Young Team

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¶5. (SBU) At their November 21 annual state convention in Biberach, the B-W Greens also elected a new leadership team. Chris Kuehn (30) represents the party's left wing while Silke Krebs (43) stands for the pragmatic part of the Greens. The B-W Greens did well in the last federal election earning 13.9% percent of the vote, which was the highest amount ever in the state. However, the Greens still fell behind the FDP and new team leaders Krebs and Kuehn now face the challenge of increasing the party's visibility and standing up to a very confident B-W FDP. Furthermore, with conservative Mappus's election as B-W Minister-president designate, Greens' prospects for participation in a 2011 government are minimal. Although M-P Oettinger once held coalition discussions with the Greens, Mappus opposes this option. The new Greens party leaders have similarly stated that they will not work with him. The impossibility of a CDU-Greens coalition may lead to a strengthening of left-wing positions within the Greens and is a set-back for Greens politicians who had openly argued that the Greens should keep the door open for cooperating with the CDU.

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT: A new and younger generation of politicians has taken charge in Baden-Wuerttemberg and is setting out to shape the future of the state. Under designated M-P Mappus, the tone will get tougher and more conservative. Under FDP chief Ruelke's leadership, the coalition between the CDU and FDP looks ready to continue and even grow closer. This might be a chance for the battered B-W SPD to set itself apart from a Conservative/Liberal coalition and help to motivate the SPD's rank and file. A more conservative CDU might also help to bring Greens and SPD in the southwest, who have been more rivals than allies, closer together again. END COMMENT.

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